The Engineer.

The railway engineer leads probably the most hazardous, and in that sense romantic, life of American civilization. He is always a brave man—none other could be an engineer. He must be a sober, punctual, cool-headed man—none other could hold his post. The engineer and his adventures is the constant source of an endless variety of thrilling or amusing stories. It is even said that among the delegates to this Buffalo Convention is the cautious engineer who side-tracked the express train one clear evening, and waited for half an hour for the wild-cat—whose headlight he saw unexpectedly bearing down on him—to pass. He learned in good time—and his crew never let him forget—that the planet Venus, on the horizon at the apparent end of his track, wasn't a wild-cat.

Oh, yes, the boys tell many a story on the brave engineer. Only the other day a newspaper correspondent, who evidently had been punished for his freshness by a joking engineer, wrote as follows:

"If the waiter is slow with his order the engineer improves his time by putting an extra cock-roach in the coffee of the party next to him, or make some remark to himself, but loud enough for every one to hear it: 'Wonder if there is another dead mouse in the prunes to-night;' and when the waiter brings his order and fires it at him as though it was shot from a catapult, he calmly gathers them in shape and asks the waiter if he can't pass some pigs feet without 'corns' on, or makes some remark about the butter being strong enough to take eighteen loads up the hill, and says the beefsteak would make good packing for his engine, and finally asks for half a dozen of the biscuits to use for track torpedoes. Having an even valve motion to his jaws, he manages to fill his tank, and then asks the conductor he is in with for a quarter, as he left his pocket-book at home on the piano. While waiting at stations he is always willing to tell the grangers, who invariably congregate to look at an engine, all they ask about it. He tells them that the big lever is to shake the grates, the throttle is to open the dampers, that the steam-gauge is the patent clock, that the cylinders are only for ornament, and that the conductor starts the train by pulling the rope. Yes, he has been in hundreds of accidents, had his engine blow up and kill everybody within six miles, and that the boiler was liable to burst at any moment, and when he has got them worked up, he suddenly gives a shrill shriek on the whistle while the fireman turns some business which lets out steam with a rush, and yells, 'She's going to bust!' and as the frightened listeners fall over each other in their efforts to get out of the danger, he and the fireman fall back on their seats and lose fifteen minutes on their running time in laughing.

"There is nothing more conducive to sociability when traveling, when you are tired of riding and stand up to stretch and yawn, than to have the engineer put on the air-brakes full force and fire us over three seats into the arms of a young lady we had not courage enough to flirt with before. It rather brakes the ice—as it were—to an introduction and better acquaintance; such negligence is excusable, but there should be a law to punish the engineer that brings the train up to a standstill just as the old lady from the country opens her lunch basket and the sudden stop fires a whole custard pie down our shirt front when we expected to get off at the next station, where our girl is waiting to receive us. The engineer is often made a hero of in prose and poetry, headed—'Died at His Post.' All honor to the faithful that have, but it is more logical to suppose that when he has reversed his engine and put it in the back motion and done all he could to avert the collision, he jumps; it don't help him any to be made hash of, even if he does get a piece of poetry for it. Were the truth known, in nine cases out of ten the engineer that dies at his post after reversing his engine is paralyzed with fright and cannot jump."—*Buffalo Express.*

The Horrible Story of Hue.

Pierre Lote, an officer of the French expeditionary force in Tonquin, sends to the Paris *Figaro* the following description of the fall of Hue: The beaten Annamites were cooped up in the burning village. The only road of escape from the flames lay under the guns of the fort, which was filled with sailors armed with Krapotchat repeating rifles with sights carefully adjusted to the distance. Magazines of rifles were duly loaded. The men looked on waiting until a flank movement of the other troops and the firing of the bamboo huts should drive the human quarry out before them. We saw them halting at the end of the village with singed hair and garments. Then after a few moments' hesitation, tucking up their flowing robes as high as they could, and trying to protect their heads with planks against the impending shower of bullets, they rushed on. A great butchering then commenced. Two volleys were fired. It was quite a treat to see these fan-like streams of bullets sweeping down upon the fugitives. They were poured in twice in one minute, at the word of command, and in a sure, methodical manner. It was like a jet from a huge watering-pot, which mowed them down by dozens. In a cloud of dust and gravel we could see some who seemed to be driven mad, picking themselves up like wounded animals. Gathering up their robes in a comical manner, their long hair unfastened and streaming down their backs made them look like women. Others tried to escape by swimming a lagoon to try to reach the junks. These were killed in the water. Some good divers remained a long time under water. Our men continued to kill them all the same, when they came up to breathe, like rats. The men then amused themselves counting the dead—fifty on the left, eighty to the right. In the village were small heaps. With those piled in the southern forts, about eight hundred or a thousand must have been disposed of. The sailors made bets as to the number destroyed. About nine in the morning all was over and the rout of the Annamites was complete. The heat was intense, and the sailors, maddened by the sun and the noise, and quivering with excitement, rushed out of the fort after the wounded. Some were crouching in holes, others were feigning death, while others at the last gasp were stretching out their hands, pleading for mercy and shouting "Han Han" in heart-rending accents. Our men slaughtered them with bayonets, or brained them with the but ends of their muskets. The Annamite servants, diminutive, effeminate lads, who had followed the infantry from Saigon, were hunted out. When one of the fugitives was unearthed the sailors would cry out, "Here's another. Come give him Leang Leang." These sailors were absolutely madmen. The officers attempted to restrain them, and said to them: "You ought to be ashamed of such cowardly, dirty work." They replied: "The Annamites are savages. They carried the head of Captain Riviere on the top of a pole, and if they carried the day they would cut the French to pieces or saw them in two with planks." There was no reply possible to this. It was true, and so they were left to their grim work.

"John!" One Hundred and Seventy-one Times.

A gentleman tells the Cleveland *Leader* this, which is repeated in his own language:

"I wish to relate to you a ludicrous little episode which took place in a drawing-room car between Boston and New York. Besides myself and wife there were four ladies and a five-year-old boy, whose name was John, all evidently traveling together, and an old gentleman who sat opposite the ladies, wearing a broad-brimmed peaked felt hat, a brown wig and very gray whiskers. He had taken off his boots and encased his feet in slippers, and ensconced himself in one of the big chairs of the car, evidently determined to make himself comfortable while he whiled away the time delving into a magazine. John was evidently a sort of a boyish nuisance. He kept moving about like a perpetual motion machine. His mother was a small, lean woman, with a thin face, long peaked nose, a pointed projecting chin, grey eyes sunk deeply in her little head. Her voice was of the most piercing, squeaking kind that could possibly be imagined. Every time her boy was engaged in some mischievous operation, the mother would reprimand him by screaming out in her horribly shrill voice, in a falsetto note, 'John!' That ear-piercing sound caused the old gentleman to give a jump as though he had heard the sudden blast of a locomotive whistle close by. Pretty soon Johny would be impaling some flies on the window and the terrific sound would be heard again, calling, 'John!' and the old gentleman would give another start in the midst of his reading. After another interval John would take a round foot cushion and roll it along the aisle, like a nine-pin ball, and it went whack against the leg of the old gentleman, and simultaneously came the sound of 'John!' in the high falsetto voice of the mother, and the gentleman gave another tremendous start. This calling of 'John' in that unearthly shrill tone was kept up every little while till the train reached Springfield. Here the old gentleman pulled on his boots, stowed away his slippers, gathered his traps together, and proceeded to get off the car. As he was passing the mother and 'John' on his way out, he stopped, looked at her in a dignified manner, showed her a piece of paper covered with tally marks, and said, in a calm loud voice: 'Madam, you have screamed out "John!" just one hundred and seventy-one times!' and with a bow threw the paper on her lap and left the car. The woman gazed at him till he disappeared with her mouth wonderingly open and in a momentarily dazed condition. Finally she came to and furiously vented her spite on John by taking him across her knees and giving him a terrific spanking in spite of his yells. The whole scene was so ridiculous and ludicrous that all of the passengers, including the ladies of the party who were traveling with the mother of "John," gave way to a paroxysm of laughter, in spite of poor John's tears at being made to suffer for the old gentleman's sarcasm."

—A young lady in Portland, Me., lately invented a table for use in Pullman cars. She applied for a patent, and her only fear was some one might have forestalled her by some invention of their own sufficiently resembling hers to make her invention useless. While awaiting results, Mr. Tucker, of the Maine Central and Eastern roads, who had seen the table, was so impressed that he expressed a willingness to get it introduced on his roads if she was successful. The young lady fell sick with typhoid fever, and on Saturday, her birthday, died. Just as she expired the looked-for patent arrived.—*Boston Post.*

—During a recent hunting excursion in the Bad Lands, Montana, in which the Marquise de Mores was accompanied by her husband, she shot and killed three deer with as much dexterity as though she was an expert at the business.

Care of Seed Corn.

There is no experience in agriculture more discouraging than a failure of seed to grow. It means more than the expense and trouble of replanting; it means a backward crop which, as a rule, proves inferior if not a failure.

Every year thousands of farmers realize, for lack of good seed corn, dearly bought experience. Their corn crops fail to be remunerative because they neglected the previous autumn to select good seed and properly cure it.

In order to have seed that will certainly germinate and grow it must be harvested previous to freezing weather and immediately dried. After the cob has become thoroughly dry it is an easy matter to save the seed. At the South, where the seasons are long, this matter of drying the corn is often taken care of by nature, but in the Eastern and Northern States the cobs, especially of the larger varieties, require to be cured by artificial means when the kernels are designed for seed.

Corn that appears to be thoroughly dried in the field, in nine cases out of ten contains enough moisture to render the kernels defective for seed, unless cured artificially. The old-fashioned way of saving seed corn is still practiced in many localities, and considered the best mode by many progressive farmers. This consists in selecting desirable ears previous to freezing weather, pulling back the husks to the butt and braiding the ears together by them in long strings. These strings of ears are then hung in some dry and well-ventilated place, as an attic or loft, until the corn is required for planting.

A Kentucky farmer who has proven to his satisfaction that if seed corn is thoroughly dried, cob included, previous to freezing weather, it is certain to germinate and grow the following season, under ordinary favorable circumstances of warmth and moisture. Every good ear for seed is laid upon a tight floor over his cook-stove, where it remains until spring, when it is shelled and kept in readiness for planting. Corn thus placed on any floor under which a fire is kept up during the fall and winter will, in his opinion, always germinate.

There is a diversity of practice in regard to the precise period when the selection of seed-corn should be made. Some cultivators gather the seed soon after the kernel is out of milk and dry it in the sun. The majority, however, prefer perfect maturity of seed, but all who have had experience in the matter realize the necessity of the thorough drying of corn before hard freezing weather.

An ear with a large cob is not considered to be as good a keeper as the one with a smaller cob, for the reason that the former contains a larger quantity of sap, hence is liable to retain dampness. After having sun-dried seed-corn, the farmers of some sections store it in lofts of smoke-houses in order that it may become permeated with the odor of the meat undergoing smoking there, and thus gain a protection when in the ground against the depredations of field mice, worms, etc. The argument in favor of this practice is that the corn becomes thoroughly saturated with creosote, which is offensive to many pests, especially squirrels.

For greatest improvement in seed observe the time of ripening, number of ears on a stalk, size of the stalk and the perfection of the ears. Corn which ripens earliest in the field, other things being favorable, is to be preferred, but there are exceptions to this general rule. For instance, when the object is to improve a variety that is very early a different course is advised. The very earliest ears often are not so large as those that come later, and by selecting these later ones for a few seasons the size of the corn is improved. On the other hand, if only the earliest ears are chosen a very early variety is gained, but it is liable to be inferior in size.

Another rule usually observed is selecting from stalks that have two or three well-developed ears, selecting the ear which grows low on the stalk. Of late years, occasional objections have been made to this practice, on the plea that the ears are liable to decrease in size as they increase in numbers.

A full-sized ear on which the rows are regular, well filled out at the end and but little larger at the butt than in the middle, if it has ripened in good season and grows low on a moderate-sized stalk and is taken from the standing corn, is first-class for the variety to which it belongs.

In selecting seed from yellow corn the color may be changed from a dark to a light yellow by selecting a light-colored ear, or vice versa. When it is desired to retain the corn as you get it the custom is to select both colors. If the crop from which you are selecting tends too much to bran or chaff, give preference to the more flinty ears.—*N. Y. World.*

—The numerous shocking acrobatic accidents which have recently occurred in some of the southern parts of Austria have determined the authorities at Trieste to introduce into the Diet of that province a bill prohibiting the performance of all dangerous feats in public in future. The female trapezist Zuco, who fell and injured herself a few nights ago at a Trieste circus, is dead. A few days before M. Amato, manager of the circus, had a terrible fall from his horse, and was lying in a dangerous condition. At Flume, on the same day, an acrobat fell during his performance, and received probably fatal injuries.

—The Washington Monument will be finished in December, 1884. Thus far it has cost $940,000.—*Washington Star.*

—Sick animals should be separated from healthy ones.